

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Anita Flores and I'm a New Haven resident,

I stand in support of HB 6616: AN ACT CONCERNING EXPANSION OF HUSKY HEALTH BENEFITS TO THOSE INELIGIBLE DUE TO IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding HUSKY access to all children and adults to age 26 regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare that we all deserve. Our work does not end with expanding access to 26 years of age; We need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age. If Connecticut wants a future that includes healthy families and a stable workforce, Connecticut must make sure these people have access to health coverage.

If we had free health insurance, that would be a good thing for everyone that suffers without insurance. We get sick and we have no way to get care or possibilities to have a check-up at the hospital and well, that is something that is very hard for a person who is undocumented in this country. If there was health insurance for, not only for me, but for all people who are sick and in worse situations it would be good so that we can go to the doctor with confidence without being afraid of any pain we may have. With health insurance, people go to the doctor safely because they have coverage that protects them. It is very difficult for me to have any check-up... it is difficult. May God bless you for this legislation if it is approved.

I have gone to the clinic and they tell me that without medical insurance they cannot see me. We go with the hope that the doctor will see us and when they ask us for our insurance and we tell them that we don't have it, they tell us that they cannot see us. We leave with sadness. Sometimes they leave us until the end to see us or they tell us to make another appointment or simply deny us care. There are many excuses that make us feel bad. It has happened to me that they do not want to see me because I do not have insurance. It is something that impacts our mental health, it makes us feel bad and overwhelmed. We even feel afraid because if we don't have insurance the doctor or nurse may say they can't see us. It is somewhat painful for us to not be able to get care in this country. Sometimes we go to the ER and we have to wait up to 5-7 hours to be seen. Just going in to have our vital signs taken is already a bill and going to the doctor is already another bill. That impacts us mentally because there's times when we receive bills of up to five thousand dollars. And I think to myself "But they only gave me a pill and that was it!". When you don't have enough money to pay a bill of three or four thousand dollars for being in the hospital for a short amount of time, it impacts you mentally. We spend more time waiting to be seen than actually being seen by a doctor at the hospital.

If we had free health insurance we could go to the doctor unafraid and confident that we will be seen right away. With health insurance, the doctors would even be more eager to see us. Expanding the HUSKY would 100% change my life and the lives of my children and other people who do not have insurance. I believe that expanding health insurance will help 100% all the people who need it.

I support HB 6616 and ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward to the future, I ask the committee to open access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

Anita